

#32

August 27, 2013

In Support of Bills 4806-4809

My name is Stephanie Mitchell and I am the niece of Rodney Corp a victim of a robbery murder back in 1996. I am speaking on behalf of my family today.

I have been following the controversy over the Supreme Court ruling, which deemed it unconstitutional to sentence juveniles to a mandatory sentence of life without the possibility of parole. I understand that Attorney General Bill Schuette has made several requests to oppose the re-sentencing of juvenile lifers on the grounds that doing so could re-traumatize victim family members who have attempted to move on with their lives

I understand that this could be true in many cases, but not all, and certainly not with our family. I would like to read a letter written to Governor Snyder in 2012 from 11 members of my family, which will explain our desires regarding Saulo Montalvo who was in the car as the get away driver when my Uncle was murdered.

Read Letter:

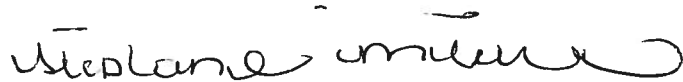
It was quite an experience to talk to Saulo, a now 33 1/2 year old man, he was crying as he begged for our forgiveness for his participation in the crime against our loved one.

As we heard the agony in his voice, we were amazed that he was still so remorseful even after 17 1/2 years behind bars, we told him we were sorry that he received life without parole as it was our desire for him to receive the minimum sentence of 5 years for his part in the crime.

We told him we forgave him and he must somehow learn to forgive himself. We told him we fully support his release and we will do whatever we can to help him get a second chance.

My family and I support bills 4806 through 4809. We must take time to review each case individually and find out what progress has been made if any. The parole system as it stands now basically passes over all juvenile lifers. It's time for this to change and at least explore the possibility that these teens who made terrible choices during vulnerable years, many who came from difficult home lives and gang infested neighborhoods have changed. Many of whom through serving time, good programming, family support and faith journeys have now grown into adults who would like to give back to society and be given a second chance to make their wrongs right.

Thank you for your time.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Stephanie Miller". The signature is written in dark ink on a white background.

## Letter from the family of the victim

February 20, 2012

Dear Governor Snyder,

This letter reflects the sentiments of the family of Rodney Corp, who in 1996 was a victim of a robbery/murder. As you might imagine, we were devastated over the event. As our family sat through the trial, we became adamant that justice be done. There were three boys involved, one being Saulo Montalvo, a boy who had just turned 16 years old. As we learned the facts of the case, we soon realized that Saulo Montalvo was not the gunman but the driver of car. He was guilty of many things but he did not kill our brother.

In our minds, the murder was committed by the other two boys involved who were not the least bit remorseful for what they had done. However, it was evident to us that Saulo was extremely remorseful for his part. As the trial developed we were taken into a private room and asked by the prosecutor "what would you like to see happen to these boy's"? We all felt that the other two boys had more involvement in the crime and because of their lack of remorse, needed no mercy shown them. We believed Saulo Montalvo, on the other hand, should have received a 5 year sentence and been released at age 21 for his part. We were shocked when he received the same punishment as the other two boys of life without any chance of parole.

We were sure that Judge Kolenda would give him the lighter sentence, which was one of his options and especially because of our request. For over 16 years now we have thought often about Saulo. A few years ago we received from Saulo a sincere and heartfelt letter of apology for which we were very thankful. Recently, we saw in the Grand Rapids Press, a series about juveniles who were sentenced to life without parole in which Saulo Montalvo was featured. He stated in the article that "If given a choice I would rather receive forgiveness from the family than freedom".

We decided to reach out to him and let him know that we did indeed forgive him. We sent a letter and later spoke to him by phone. We found out he is doing well and is studying to be a minister in prison. He taught himself to play the guitar and leads worship in the prison church at Earnest C. Brooks facility where he is incarcerated. He continues to live with guilt and shame for what he did as a teenager. We strongly urged him to forgive himself as we had done. There is no doubt that this young man is a different person from all those years ago.

Governor sir, because of the circumstances surrounding this case, and our family's unified conclusions regarding it, we are asking you as Saulo's only hope, to pardon Mr. Montalvo. We ask on Saulo's behalf that you would grant him mercy. He is a fine young man who has many people who love him and will support him if he is released. We believe our brother Rodney would agree that Saulo deserves a second

chance to make a difference with his life. We appreciate that Saulo has always taken full responsibility for his involvement. Yes, he should have made better choices with his life, but our family is in agreement that he has paid for those mistakes, over the past 16 years behind bars. We all deserve another chance.

Thank you Governor Snyder, for your consideration in regards to this case.

Sincerely,  
The family members of Rodney Corp  
1140 Colrain SW  
Wyoming, MI 49509  
1-616-532-3734

Stephanie (niece)

Glenn Penshue (Sister)

Julie Wilson (sister)

Jana Corp (sister)

John Mart  
Catherine (Niece)

Paul Paul (Niece)

Lauri (Niece)

Jennifer Malenka (Niece)

Matt Malenka (nephew)

JS (nephew)

Signed & notarized  
March 5, 2012  
Colleen Wilson

For Kent Co.